

## SESSION 5: ANXIETY

### ELEMENTARY

**Session Time:** 45 minutes

**Objective:**

- Students will discuss their specific fears and anxieties.
- Students will learn healthy responses to dealing with fears and anxieties.

**Materials:**

- Bowl or basket labeled “worry well”
- “Worry well” stories (see p. 28)
- Craft glue
- Two small clean rocks for each student (found at a garden or craft store)
- Craft eyes
- Markers
- Cotton filler/cotton balls
- Index cards

**Activity:**

- Begin the group time by explaining rules to the “worry well” activity. Ask students to draw a card out of the “worry well” without peeking. The cards should have brief stories about something people might worry about. (See attached sheet or use your own stories.)
- Let the student read the story aloud. Ask the student to say whether he/she would be worried or stressed out in the same situation. If so, what would he/she do to stop being anxious? If not, what would he/she tell other people to stop them from being anxious? Make a list as the students brainstorm so they see solutions to dealing with anxiety.
- Tell students they are going to make two worrywarts: one for themselves and one to put in their honor box. Pass out glue, rocks, craft eyes, index cards and markers. It would be helpful to have the materials divided into individual baggies for each student.

- Copy the following poem on an index card:  
Worry, worry, worry  
It makes your thinking blurry!  
When you can't change a worry of any sort  
Just give that worry to the worrywart!  
Put glue on the index card where you want to place the worrywart.
- Glue the rock to the index card.
- Place two small dots of glue on the rock where you want to place the eyes.
- Glue the eyes to the rock.
- Glue the cotton to the rock to look like hair.
- Draw a mouth and color the hair.
- Repeat for the second worrywart to send to the student's family member.

### Process:

- Talk about specific fears, both in general and in regard to deployment/war.
- Brainstorm about healthy responses to being fearful.
- Talk about figuring out solutions to feeling anxious or worried. Ask students what they do when they are afraid.

### Evaluation:

- Ask students to share one thing they feel anxious or worried about. Go around the circle, and have other students list solutions on how to overcome the worry. Hand out index cards, and have the students write an idea for the student to his/her left.

### Homework:

- Take your worrywart home and share what you learned with someone at home.
- Journal: Write about your fears. How do you cope?

Worrywart Activity: Wittmer, J., Thompson, D.W., & Lorsch, L. (2000). *Classroom guidance activities: A sourcebook for elementary school counselors*. Minneapolis, MN: Educational Media Corporation.

## Worry Well Stories

Write the following on index cards (or make up your own) and put into a basket or bowl. Ask students to draw a card and read the story aloud. Discuss whether they would be worried in a similar situation. Why or why not? What are the solutions?

- Ben lost his homework because his room is a mess. It is getting close to his bedtime, but he knows he needs to do the work before he goes to school tomorrow.
- Catherine invited Mary, the new student from class, over to play Xbox, but she does not really know Mary and is a little nervous that they will not have anything to talk about. She wishes she had invited one of her good friends over, too, just in case, but now it is too late because Mary is supposed to arrive in five minutes.

- Andrea is moving to a new school next year. She has so many friends and does not want to leave them. She is a little bit excited to live in a new place, but she feels like she is going to miss out on things by leaving.
- Henry has a basketball game tonight. He has always been the star of the team, but the team they are playing tonight has two tall, athletic guys. He has heard that the team they are playing is unstoppable, and he is losing confidence that his team will win.
- Laura's mom is a good cook, but tonight she is making meatloaf. Laura does not want to be rude, but she does not think she will like the meatloaf at all. The thought of it grosses her out.
- It is the first day of school, and Kathleen is ready to start a new year. She has a book bag filled with school supplies ready by the door. She leaves home with plenty of time to get to the bus stop. She is hoping this year will be a lot better than last year because she really did not enjoy her teacher last year.
- Robert is really sad these days. His grandmother is sick in the hospital, and he does not ever get to see her. His parents tell him that she is fine and not to worry, but that is all he can seem to think about right now. He wishes he could visit her more often.
- Brian's mother is about to have another baby. Brian has always been the only child, but now he is going to have a new little sister. He does not know what to think because it is a new situation for him. He has heard that little sisters can be a pain, but part of him is excited to have someone else in his family.
- Sarah is on the fastest roller coaster ever. She has always heard about Thunder Road but has never gotten to ride it. She usually avoids roller coasters because they scare her, but today her friends talked her into riding it. The roller coaster is slowly creeping up the steep hill, and she can see that it is a long way down.

## ALTERNATIVE SESSION - FEELINGS (MIDDLE)

**Session Time:** 45 minutes. You may take one or two sessions to talk about feelings with middle school students. It depends on how open they are to talking.

### Objectives:

- Students will identify their feelings about deployment.
- Students will brainstorm different solutions to deal with their feelings and form connections with other students based on these feelings.

### Materials:

- Jenga® (Buy Jenga and color the ends of the blocks.)
- Game cards
- Paper
- Crayons

### Activity:

- Begin by discussing feelings in general. Brainstorm about the difference between positive and negative feelings. Talk about the students' feelings about deployment.
- Play Jenga® according to the instructions included with the game.

- Each time a student chooses a block, he or she must pick up a card that coordinates with the color on the ends of the game piece. Each color has a different feeling theme:  
Red = Anger  
Orange = Proud  
Yellow = Sadness  
Green = Lonely  
Blue = Anxiety  
Purple = General Feelings  
Heart = Student Choice
- Have students follow the instructions on the card and allow discussion.

**Process:**

- School counselor will help to process throughout the game by asking questions of the group members and forming connections.
- Ask students what part of this activity was most helpful to them and why.

**Evaluation:**

- Ask students what they learned about themselves today.
- See if there is an emotion discussed in today's group that the students might not have experienced. Ask if there is an emotion they might not have realized they were feeling until this activity.
- Ask students to share one of their feelings regarding deployment and how they are going to cope with this feeling.
- If there is time, ask students to share a feeling that the person to their right shared. How can this person overcome this feeling?

**Homework:**

- Journal: Write in your journal about your feelings regarding your family member being deployed. Keep in mind that it isn't easy for anyone to deal with a parent being deployed. You are entitled to your feelings. Try to talk about your positive and negative feelings. If you do not feel like writing, draw a picture to express your feelings.

Lesson plan and game cards adapted from: Seaberg, G.C. (2005). *S.M.A.S.H.: Small group meetings about self-harm: A Small group curriculum designed for middle school girls*. Marymount University.

# Red Cards – Anger

Draw something that makes you angry, and have the group guess what it is.	Describe another emotion you feel when you are angry.
Define anger.	Make your best angry face.
Take three deep breaths.	How can you cope with your angry feelings while your family member is away?
Count backward from 10.	What makes you the most angry about your family member being deployed?
Do 10 jumping jacks.	Describe how you feel physically when you are angry.

## Orange Cards – Proud

Draw something that makes you proud, and have the group guess what it is.	How can you express the feeling “proud”?
How can you let your family member know you are proud of him or her?	Say three things you are proud of (in general or in regard to your family member).
What does proud mean?	Draw a picture of something patriotic, and have the group guess what it is.
Stand up and say, “I am proud of myself because....”	Think of someone else in the group. What are you proud of him/her for? Tell that person.
True or false: It is okay for me to be proud of my family member but also feel angry at the same time.	What do you think your family member would say that he or she is proud of you for?

# Yellow Cards – Sadness

Draw something that makes you sad, and have the group guess what it is.	When was the last time you felt sad?
What is a positive way to express your sad feelings?	What is a negative way to express your sad feelings?
Define sadness.	Tell the group what makes you most sad about your family member being away.
Ask another group member what makes him or her sad.	When you are sad, is it hard to concentrate on schoolwork?
What are some solutions to dealing with sadness?	What do you think your family member would say to you about your sadness?

## Green Cards – Lonely

Draw something that makes you lonely, and have the group guess what it is.	When was the last time you felt lonely?
Define lonely.	What is a solution to when you feel lonely?
What do you miss about your family member?	Tell the group what makes you most lonely about your family member being away.
Ask everyone in the group, “Do you feel lonely sometimes?”	When you are lonely, is it hard to concentrate on schoolwork?
Who can you talk to if you are feeling lonely?	What do you think your family member would say to you about your lonely feeling?